

# Iowa Site Inventory Form

State Historic Preservation Office

(January 2016)

State Inventory Number: 44-00442  New  Supplemental

9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-extant Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions carefully, to ensure accuracy and completeness before completing this form. The instructions are available on our website.**

• **Property Name**

A) Historic name: Henry County Courthouse

B) Other names: 2023 downtown survey # DT-122

• **Location**

A) Street address: 100 E. Washington St

B) City or town: Mount Pleasant ( Vicinity) County: Henry

C) Legal description:

Rural: Township Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Township No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Range No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter: \_\_\_\_\_ of Quarter: \_\_\_\_\_

Urban: Subdivision: Original Block(s): 11 Lot(s): 1-8

• **Classification**

**A) Property category:** *Check only one*

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**B) Number of resources (within property):**

<i>If eligible property, enter number of:</i>		<i>If non-eligible property, enter number of:</i>	
Contributing	Noncontributing		
<u>1</u>	Buildings	<u>—</u>	Buildings
<u>—</u>	Sites	<u>—</u>	Sites
<u>—</u>	Structures	<u>—</u>	Structures
<u>1</u>	Objects	<u>2</u>	Objects
<u>2</u>	<b>Total</b>	<u>2</u>	<b>Total</b>

**C) For properties listed in the National Register:**

National Register status:  Listed  De-listed  NHL  NPS DOE

**D) For properties within a historic district:**

- Property contributes to a National Register or local certified historic district.
- Property contributes to a potential historic district, based on professional historic/architectural survey and evaluation.
- Property *does not* contribute to the historic district in which it is located.

Historic district name: Mt Pleasant Downtown Historic District Historic district site inventory number: 44-02280

**E) Name of related project report or multiple property study, if applicable:**

MPD title: Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of Downtown Mt Pleasant, Iowa Historical Architectural Data Base #: HADB-02986

• **Function or Use** *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

**A) Historic functions**

04J01: GOVERNMENT / county courthouse

**B) Current functions**

04J01: GOVERNMENT / county courthouse

• **Description** *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

**A) Architectural classification**

06C: 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS / Classical Revival

**B) Materials**

Foundation (visible exterior): 10B: Concrete

Walls (visible exterior): 04C: Limestone

Roof: 15C: Rubber

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**C) Narrative description**  *SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED*

• **Statement of Significance**

**A) Applicable National Register Criteria:** *Mark your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria*

- Criterion A: Property is associated with significant events.  Yes  No  More research recommended  
Criterion B: Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.  Yes  No  More research recommended  
Criterion C: Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.  Yes  No  More research recommended  
Criterion D: Property yields significant information in archaeology/history.  Yes  No  More research recommended

**B) Special criteria considerations:** *Mark any special considerations; leave blank if none*

- A: Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.  E: A reconstructed building, object, or structure.  
 B: Removed from its original location.  F: A commemorative property.  
 C: A birthplace or grave.  G: Property less than 50 years of age or  
 D: A cemetery. achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**C) Areas of significance**

*Enter categories from instructions*

26: Politics/Government

02: Architecture

**D) Period(s) of significance**

**E) Significant dates**

*Construction date*

1914  *check if circa or estimated date*

*Other dates, including renovations*

1943, 1951, 1994

**F) Significant person**

*Complete if Criterion B is marked above*

**G) Cultural affiliation**

*Complete if Criterion D is marked above*

**H) Architect/Builder**

*Architect*

*Builder/contractor*

**I) Narrative statement of significance**  **SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED**

• **Bibliography**  *See continuation sheets for the list research sources used in preparing this form*

• **Geographic Data** *Optional UTM references*  *See continuation sheet for additional UTM or comments*

Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD	Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD
1				2			
3				4			

• **Form Preparation**

Name and Title: Rebecca Lawin McCarley / research by Bob Mueller & Pat White Date: March 26, 2024

Organization/firm: SPARK Consulting / Mt Pleasant HPC E-mail: sparkconsulting@octaspark.com

Street address: 1630 Park Ave SE Telephone: 319-200-9767

City or Town: Cedar Rapids State: IA Zip code: 52403

• **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION** *Submit the following items with the completed form*

**A) For all properties, attach the following, as specified in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions:**

- 1. Map** of property's location within the community.
- 2. Glossy color 4x6 photos labeled** on back with property/building name, address, date taken, view shown, and unique photo number.
- 3. Photo key showing each photo number on a map and/or floor plan, using arrows next to each photo number to indicate the location and directional view of each photograph.**
- 4. Site plan** of buildings/structures on site, identifying boundaries, public roads, and building/structure footprints.

**B) For State Historic Tax Credit Part 1 Applications, historic districts and farmsteads, and barns:**

*See lists of special requirements and attachments in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions.*

**State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line**

*The SHPO has reviewed the Site Inventory and concurs with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility:*

- Yes  No  More research recommended  
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

SHPO authorized signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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100 E. Washington St	Mount Pleasant
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**7. Narrative Description**

The Henry County Courthouse is a two-story Classical Revival stone building that sits in the middle of the block to the southeast corner of the square (Central Park). The courthouse was built in 1912-14 with Bedford stone, and it faces Washington St to the north. A sidewalk in the center of the block historically and currently leads to the main entry, which has wide stone steps and lights on the side walls. The middle section of the façade is slightly projected, framed by flat wide stone pilasters. Four large round pilasters are centered on the middle of this section, “supporting” an entablature that reads “Henry County Court House.” The double-door entry has pilasters and a pediment, with a stone star detail above the doors. A large window is centered above the entry, with typical windows on each side to either side on the middle section. The original windows were one-over-one-light double-hung windows with a transom. The windows were replaced in the 1990s with fixed windows that reflect the original configuration. The parapet of this middle section was originally terra cotta, which deteriorated by the early 1940s. The original parapet was replaced by the simple Bedford stone parapet in 1943. The slightly recessed bays to either side of the middle section have paired windows with a shared stone surround and sill. The basement level has stone block courses with a water table, with paired windows with jack lintels under the upper windows. The east and west elevations are identical and reflective of the façade. A wider middle section has three single windows on each story, with a stone surround around each window. The bays to either side have paired windows, with a shared stone surround. The basement level has stone block courses and windows with jack lintels. The south/rear elevation is a simplified version of the façade. The middle section is slightly projected, with a single-door entry with transom, pilasters, and pediment at the center at the ground level. The basement level has stone block courses and windows with jack arches. A large, tall window is located above the rear entrance. The windows on each story to either side are paired, with shared stone surrounds and sills. The side bays to either side of the center section have paired windows with shared stone surrounds and stone sills. The interior was not included as part of this project. However, it is noted that the rotunda and circulation spaces remain original and with historic materials, with some remodeling in individual office spaces.

In addition to the courthouse, there are several objects located at the northwest corner of the property. A stone tablet memorial, known as the Henry County Veterans Memorial Marker, is the closest to the corner. While it has a 1957 date, it was originally located near the memorial hospital in Saunders Park and moved to this location in 1994. The copper Statue of Liberty replica sits further in from the corner, installed in 1951 and donated by the Boy Scouts. It sits on a concrete base with a concrete planter around the base. Further to the east of these objects, near the center of the northwest quadrant, is the Avenue of Flags Veterans Memorial of Henry County, which was erected in 1994. It consists of a pentagon concrete pad, with a center stone tablet marker to dedicate the memorial to veterans and three stone tablet markers diagonally away to the front of the center marker on each side and two additional tablet markers added to the front on each side that have names of veterans from Henry County. Two stone benches sit on the front/north part of the pad.

A large parking lot is located to the south of the courthouse. It was originally small and center, and it has been enlarged at several points. Parking has also been added on the east, south, and north sides of the courthouse block, cutting into the lawn/sidewalk area.

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**8. Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Henry County Courthouse appears to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building within the potential Mount Pleasant Downtown Historic District. The building contributes to the historic character of the downtown, serving its role as the seat of county government since its completion in 1914. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a historic commercial building in a historic district.

The Henry County Courthouse was previously listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981 under Criterion C for its architecture and under Criterion A for its historic significance as part of the Multiple Property Document (MPD) listing for county courthouses in Iowa. The simple nomination form states:

A good example of a very simplified neoclassicism, in which detail is cut to a minimum. Windows have simple, shortened surrounds, and the parapet rises unbroken by a cornice of any kind, as an extension of the outer wall plane. The engaged giant columns are a simplified Roman Doric, and entrance detail is limited to a small triangular pediment on plain brackets. This courthouse is locally significant as the historical focus of county government, and of the political power and prestige derived from the community's status as the county seat. As center of county government, an Iowa town was reasonably assured of economic and population growth, and a prominent role in local social and political life. The county courthouse represents a significant public investment in a structure built not simply for utilitarian purposes, but also as a monument associated with the historical importance of county organization and development.

*Developmental history of property*

This is the third Henry County Courthouse, which was built from 1912 to 1914. The top of the building was remodeled in 1943, and an elevator addition was added in 1980.

The first courthouse was in the center of the town square, completed in 1839. There is a boulder marker placed in 1929 in Central Park for this original courthouse, noted as the first building constructed for that specific purpose in Iowa. The brick courthouse was noted as too small for the town by 1857. When Union Block was constructed on the north side of the square in 1861, the third story was leased to the county for 10 years for court purposes (*Mt Pleasant Home Journal*, April 13, 1861, 1). In 1862, the county clerk and recorder's offices moved from the old court house to the second story of Union Block ("The Bystander's Notes," *Mt Pleasant News*, February 17, 1942, 2). The courthouse in the center of the park was not maintained, and it was noted as an eyesore by the late 1860s.

With the expiration of the lease for Union Block in spring 1871, the county entered discussions with W.R. Hill, who had built a two-story brick commercial building at the southeast corner of E. Washington and S. Main streets at the southeast corner of the square. In April 1871, the board of supervisors entered into an agreement to lease the new building of W.R. Hill for \$1,000 per year, with an option to purchase it for \$10,000 that was approved at an election in October 1871. This second courthouse building was located at the northwest corner of the current courthouse house block. The courthouse in the center of the public square was demolished, opening up the square for development as a public park. An addition was later added on the east end ("The Bystander's Notes," *Mt Pleasant News*, February 17, 1942, 2; MPS 1985:

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7; "A New Court House," *Free Press*, August 26, 1897, 1). Issues with deterioration of the brick building were noted by the late 1890s, with discussions to either make extensive repairs or construct a new building ("A New Court House," *Free Press*, August 26, 1897, 1). The building was repaired at this point.

The 1909 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the courthouse in the two-story brick building at the northwest corner of Block 11 on Lot 1 at the southeast corner of the square and the southeast corner of Washington and Main streets. The sheriff's residence and county jail are located on Lot 2 to the south. There is a stable to the rear of the building. Five residences are located on Block 11.

After several years of discussion, construction of a new Henry County Courthouse moved forward in 1911. Issues with deterioration had been noted for several years prior to the decision to move forward with a new courthouse. Two bond proposals for a new courthouse failed, but each time the margin of defeat narrowed. On June 6, 1911, a bond referendum for construction of a \$100,000 courthouse was approved in a special election by a slim margin of 1,405 to 1,292. Immediately after the favorable vote, the board proceeded with selecting an architect (Financial Statement of Henry County, For Year 1911, Compiled by H.N. Wright, County Auditor, page 15). In September 1911, Joseph W. Royer of Urbana, Illinois, was chosen as the architect, known as a prolific architect for public buildings in the region ("The New Court House," *Mount Pleasant Journal*, September 22, 1911, 1).

Plans for the new courthouse described in early 1912 noted a building to be 105 feet long by 85 feet wide and three stories in height. It will be built of Bedford stone and fire proof throughout. The third story is given over entirely to the district court, the second or main floor to the county offices, and the first or ground floor to the service rooms, the Memorial room, and the special rooms for the county superintendent. A feature of the building will be the Memorial rotunda on the Main floor, on the walls of which will be preserved in bronze the names of the 1,800 men of Henry County who offered their lives for their country in 1861-'65 (Financial Statement of Henry County, For Year 1911, Compiled by H.N. Wright, County Auditor, page 15). The plans were approved in February 1912, and Royer was directed to prepare plans and specifications for bidding. The main corridor would include tablets in honor of soldiers from Henry County ("New Court House Plans," *Mount Pleasant Journal*, February 13, 1912, 1). A request for bids was issued in March per plans and specifications prepared by Joseph W. Royer, architect, Urbana, IL ("Court House, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa," *Mount Pleasant Journal*, March 22, 1912, 1). English Brothers Construction of Champaign, IL, was awarded the contract for construction in April 1912 for \$82,717.00, which ensured the completion of the court house well within the \$100,000 limit. ("English Bros Given Contract", *Mt. Pleasant Daily News*, April 19, 1912, 3; Financial Statement of Henry County, For Year 1911, Compiled by H.N. Wright, County Auditor, page 15).

The construction was halted shortly after it began in May as the editor of the *Mt Pleasant Daily News* suggested a revision to the site plan to place the courthouse in the center of the block (rather than in the northwest corner on the earlier site) and to place the heating plant with smokestack on the block to the south (rather than the southeast corner), which would also have room for a new sheriff's residence and jail with the demolition of Centennial School (closed after new high school built) ("The Bystander's Notes", *Mt. Pleasant Daily News*, May 15, 1912, page 2). The Board of Supervisors halted construction and voted to move the courthouse to the center of the block and purchase the Centennial School property to the south from the city. The change was completed without additional costs (*Mt. Pleasant Daily News*, May 17, 1912, 3; "The Bystander's Notes", *Mt. Pleasant Daily News*, May 17, 1912, 2). Thus, the Henry

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County Courthouse was constructed in a prominent location in the center of the block to the southeast of the public square.

Construction had the usual share of problems, extending over two years from 1912 to 1914. The cornerstone listing the architect and contractor caused some controversy as this was viewed as unwanted advertising. ("That Corner Stone," *Mt. Pleasant Daily News*, July 26 1912; "The Corner Stone", *Mt. Pleasant Daily News*, July 31, 1912). In September 1912, there was a strike by the bricklayers from a dispute between the general foreman and the bricklayers' foreman ("Strike Now On At Court House", September 11, 1912, 3). With various delays with the construction, the walls and roof were completed on December 27, 1913 (Jaynes 1976: 87). Work then continued on the interior of the building. The new court house was officially dedicated on July 4, 1914, and opened to the public for inspection, though it was not yet completely finished ("Grand Celebration Here on Fourth," *Mt Pleasant Journal*, July 2, 1914, 5). The *Mt Pleasant Journal* noted later in July 1914 that occupancy was anticipated in August. The vote to complete the overall work for the project was not anticipated to be completed immediately, without demand by the residents. Additional work for the overall project included purchasing remaining properties in the block not owned by the country, demolishing existing buildings on the block, and moving the sheriff's residence and county jail building to the location to the south next to the power plant ("Getting Move on New Court House," *Mt Pleasant Journal*, July 16, 1914, 1). On Wednesday, July 29, 1914, the official ceremony handing the building over from English Brothers Construction to Henry County was completed, with work then to move county offices from the old building at the northwest corner to the new building in the middle of the block ("New Court House Accepted," *Mt Pleasant Journal*, July 30, 1914, 1). By Saturday August 1, the county officials were noted to be practically all moved in and transacting business in their new offices (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, August 1, 1914, 4). One feature of the new courthouse was commodious restrooms that were open to the public, as well as sanitary drinking fountains. The ground level had men's restrooms and women's restrooms, with the later including tables, rockers, lounges, mirrors, and hot and cold water at the lavatories ("Rest Rooms Provided," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, August 13, 1914, 8).

Work was still left to be completed on the site. On Saturday August 8, 1914, the fixtures and furnishings of the old courthouse were auctioned off by auctioneer John Wenger, with the best items previously moved to the new courthouse or county home. Several of the chairs were purchased by the Methodist Church. James Purdie purchased the old building for \$217.50, tasked with removing the building and debris within 60 days. Material would be salvaged in cooperation with E.E. Taft. A number of other buildings remained on the block, with no plans set for their removal ("Old Court House Sold," *Mt Pleasant Journal*, August 13, 1914, 1). The question of the other buildings was put to voters in November 1914 with two items on the ballot. The first requested authorization to construct a new jail and sheriff's residence at a cost not to exceed \$8,000. The second requested authorization to purchase the remaining property not owned in Block 11 at a cost not to exceed \$7,000 ("Notice of General Elections," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, October 29, 1914, 2). The proposition for a new county jail and sheriff's residence was voted down by a 2 to 1 margin, and the proposition to purchase the last two properties on the block also failed ("The Election in Henry County," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, November 4, 1914, 3). The latter reached a crisis point by February 1916 as grading for the property was negatively impacting one of the homes ("Should Buy Lots," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, February 4, 1916, 3). This one-story brick house to the west of the courthouse was purchased from George E. Crane, noted as the first brick residence in town. It had been built by John B. Lash in fall 1838 ("The Bystander's Notes," *Mt Pleasant News*, July 22, 1946, 2). Though one property was purchased and demolished, the other property was not yet acquired by

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December 1918. The question of whether to demolish the sheriff's residence and county jail building or move it to the new site next to the heating plant had yet to be decided either ("Boost for Next Year," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, December 12, 1918, 3). The question of purchasing the Osgood property on the court house was finally authorized by voters in September 1919 at the same election regarding the question of building a county hospital ("Hospital Wins Out," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, September 11, 1919, 3). Work on clearing the northeast corner of the block was then undertaken in October (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, October 22, 1919, 4).

The 1920 Sanborn shows the courthouse built in the center of Block 11. The map notes that it was built in 1912, had steam heat and electrical lights, and was fireproof construction with reinforced concrete floors. The old sheriff's residence and county jail remains in its earlier building, which is located on lot 2 to the west of the new courthouse (was south of the old courthouse at the northwest corner of the block). The other houses and outbuildings on the block have been demolished. A brick building has been constructed on this site across Clay St to the south, which is noted as the county heating plant (see Iowa #44-02235). It is a brick building with 12' walls and a cement floor. The west portion of the building is noted for coal storage. There is a tall round smokestack to the south of the building.

In April 1921, bids were received for moving the brick building known as the sheriff's residence and building a new jail on the lot east of the courthouse house heating plant ("Notice to Bidders," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, April 7, 1921, 3). In June 1921, the old sheriff's residence was moved to its foundation on the new site, and work proceeded on building the new jail to its rear. The old cells were utilized in the new building ("Sheriff's Residence Moved," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, June 8, 1921, 3).

In April 1934, the parking area at the rear of the courthouse was being widened and guard wires placed in order that cars may not creep over on to the lawn ("Local Happenings," *Mt Pleasant News*, April 26, 1934, 5). Work was nearly completed on the enlargement of the parking area at the rear of the court house by April 30. The driveway and parking area had been widened by Warren Martin and his helpers, with crushed stone to be placed over the added spaces ("Completing Work on Enlarging of Parking Area," *Mt Pleasant News*, April 30, 1934, 4). The crushed stone lot was later paved in 1939 ("May Pave Parking Area South of Court House," *Mt Pleasant News*, January 28, 1939, 1).

The 1938 city directory notes that the beautiful classical courthouse had been built at a cost of \$125,000, and it was centered on a fine block (Groce 1938: 5). A photograph of the building was also included in the directory. It shows the sidewalk leading up to the steps at the entrance on the north side of the building.

The 1942 Sanborn map shows the Henry County Courthouse in the center of Block 11, and it is the only building on the block. The map notes that it was built in 1912, had steam heat and electrical lights, and was fireproof construction with reinforced concrete floors. The map shows the same footprint for the county heating plant located on the block to the south. The brick building used as the sheriff's residence has been moved from west of the courthouse to the site east of this building, with the new county jail addition at its rear. Two frame buildings clad in metal siding sit to the south on the lot, which are noted as county supply sheds.

Deterioration was noted around the decorative balustrade top of the Henry County Courthouse in summer 1942, with disintegration of terra cotta blocks due to water over last 30 years. Rather than complete the

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extensive repairs required, the parapet was removed down to the cornice of the building, with the feature replaced by a simple Bedford stone wall with no terra cotta. This design change streamlined and modernized the appearance of the courthouse. With full sandblasting of the entire surface, the end result was noted to be similar to the new Iowa courthouses built within the last five years. Work on the courthouse was completed in spring 1943 ("Blueprints Show Courthouse Plan," *Mt Pleasant News*, August 18, 1942, 1; "Courthouse Work Nearing Completion," *Mt Pleasant News*, April 5, 1943, 1).

With World War II underway, a Henry County Honor Roll was constructed at the northwest corner of the courthouse block in spring 1943, dedicated on July 4, 1943. G.E. King chaired the committee to collect the names for the list of men and women "going into service directly from this county." The honor roll was constructed by K.A. Bergdahl and his crew, and J.K. Magnuson painted the decorative effects ("Around the Town and Countryside, with Sally Sue", *Mount Pleasant News*, July 3, 1943, 4; "Around the Town and Countryside, with Sally Sue", *Mount Pleasant News*, July 8, 1943, 4; Jaynes 1976: 142). The entire structure was sold and dismantled in 1949 ("Honor Roll Material for Sale to Highest Bidder," *Mt Pleasant News*, July 22, 1949).

In 1951, an 8-foot replica of the Statue of Liberty was donated by the Boy Scouts of America for the courthouse grounds. The Boy Scouts of America celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1950 with the theme of Strengthen the Art of Liberty, starting with a ceremony at the base of the Statue of Liberty. Approximately 200 replicas made of stamped copper were donated in 39 states, including at least 25 in towns in Iowa. The *Mount Pleasant News* noted in April 1951: "The Statue of Liberty to be dedicated Memorial Day is a faithful duplicate in miniature... It will be located at the southeast corner of the square, on the court house lawn... Its overall height will be a little over eight feet, stamped out of heavy sheet copper and well braced... The statue will stand on a concrete foundation with dimension sufficient to guarantee permanency. The exposed upper part will be veneered with six-inch limestone, which matched the exterior of the court house. The height of the foundation above ground is recommended as between seven and eight feet, making the total height from ground level to tip of torch around seventeen feet. Around the pedestal will be an eleven-pointed foot thick star... The occasion will be the observation of the fortieth anniversary of the Boy Scout organization... We understand a fine dedicatory program is being prepared ("The Bystander's Notes", *Mount Pleasant News*, April 3, 1951, page 2). Donations from boys and girls throughout the county were collected in May, along with donations from local firms for construction of the pedestal ("Boys and Girls Contributing to Statue Fund," *Mount Pleasant News*, May 18, 1951, 1; *Mount Pleasant News*, May 23, 1951, 1). The Statue of Liberty was dedicated on May 31, 1951, including an address by Judge Paul McCoid ("Statue Dedications Held," *Mount Pleasant News*, May 31, 1951, 1). In June: "Many persons have commented favorably regarding the copy of the Statue of Liberty erected on the Henry County courthouse lawn as a project of the Boy Scout organization and recently dedicated. Flowers are blooming in the area at the base of the statue. Lights are to be installed soon" ("Statue of Liberty On Courthouse Lawn," *Mount Pleasant News*, June 5, 1951, 1).

The ample grounds of the courthouse block were utilized for additional parking to serve the courthouse and downtown businesses starting in the late 1950s. E. Clay St between Main and Adams on the south side of the block and S. Adams St between Washington and Clay on the east side of the block were widened in 1957 to add angled parking along these sides of the courthouse block. The parking cut slightly into the lawn area on these sides of the courthouse ("To Provide More Parking," *Mt Pleasant News*, January 17, 1957, 1). The parking lot was further improved to the south of the courthouse in 1960 ("Growth and Expansion Reflected in Stories of 1960 in Mt Pleasant," *Mt Pleasant News*, December 31,



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1960, 1). Adding more space on the courthouse block for parking was a recommendation of the 1967 comprehensive plan for the City of Mount Pleasant (Shafer 1967: 127-128). In August 1969, the enlarged south parking lot was completed by H. Eugene Smith Construction Company. The larger parking lot would accommodate 43 cars, a 50% increase in space ("Open New Paved Parking Area," *Mount Pleasant News*, August 4, 1969, page 1). One of the recommendations of the central business district comprehensive plan in May 1973 was to add additional parking on the west side of the courthouse on S. Main St, cutting into the lawn on this side as had been previously done on other sides. Parallel parking spaces were constructed in 100 block of S. Main at west side of courthouse in 1975 ("Local construction book in '75," *Mt Pleasant News*, December 27, 1975, 1).

On October 27, 1973, Henry County received national recognition as the first county in the nation designated as a Bicentennial County, with a ceremony on the courthouse lawn to present the bicentennial flag to Helen M. Virden, chair of the Henry County Bicentennial Commission. As a bicentennial county, Henry County became eligible for federal funds. Major projects planned for the county included the expansion of the museum of repertoire theater on the Old Threshers grounds in McMillan Park, building of a historic center, writing of a county history, a three-day festival in July 1976, and special programming at Old Threshers reunion in September 1976, among other events and activities ("Bicentennial flag given to county," *Mt Pleasant News*, October 29, 1973, 1). A flag raising ceremony with Mayor Edd King and others was held in front of City Hall on January 3, 1976, officially designating Mt Pleasant as a Bicentennial City. Henry County and Jefferson County were noted to have more projects accomplished and planned than any other place in Iowa, working to develop the area as the heritage center of Iowa. The goal for the Henry County Bicentennial Commission for the year was to have every school and town designated by the National Bicentennial Commission, which required meeting certain eligibility criteria for projects, programming, and events ("Bicentennial flag ceremonies held," *Mt Pleasant News*, January 5, 1976, 1). The bicentennial celebration for the Fourth of July was capped by a special ceremony at sunset to kick off the drive for a bicentennial time capsule, a project co-coordinated by the Lions Club. The bicentennial flag and an Iowa flag would be placed in the time capsule, along with other historical and current items ("Sunset ceremony to end celebration on July 4," *Mt Pleasant News*, June 22, 1976, 1). The time capsule was vault donated by the Weir-Cookes Funeral Home, with a plaque to mark the location. The capsule would be opened in 2026, resealed, and opened again in 2076 (*Mt Pleasant News*, October 13, 1976, 1). On November 11, 1976, the time capsule ceremony concluded the three-year activities of the Henry County Bicentennial Commission, set to the backdrop of the Avenue of Flags consisting of 304 flags honoring the deceased veterans in Henry County ("Time Capsule Ceremony," *Mount Pleasant News*, November 12, 1976, 1; "Bicentennial Commission has luncheon after ceremony," *Mt Pleasant News*, November 19, 1976, 3; "Under Helen's Hat," *Mt Pleasant News*, November 20, 1976, 2).

Improvements to accessibility at the Henry County Courthouse were completed in 1980. Bids were received in late 1979 to add a new stairwell on the east side of the north entrance and to add an elevator on the east side of the south entrance at a cost of approximately \$100,000. The south door was replaced with a larger single door at ground level, with the exterior steps removed. Work was completed by H. Eugne Smith Construction Co ("Courthouse to have new staircase, elevator," *Mount Pleasant News*, December 1, 1979; "1980: year of progress, controversy, tragedy, lively elections," *Mt Pleasant News*, January 3, 1981, 1).

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The Henry County Courthouse was included as part of a statewide survey of county courthouses by the Department for Historic Preservation (now State Historic Preservation Office) in 1980. It was nominated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

In 1957, the Memorial Marker project committee, with 23 members representing patriotic organizations in town, worked to raise funds and coordinate the installation of a memorial marker to veterans. They worked with Stan Hunsaker of Case Memorials for the marker, which was placed northwest of the Henry County Soldiers and Sailors Memorial General Hospital (later Henry County Health Center) in Saunders Park on the south side of town. The marker was dedicated on Memorial Day, May 30, 1957 (“Plan Dedication of Memorial Marker on Memorial Day,” *Mt Pleasant News*, May 9, 1957, 1; “Dedication of Memorial Marker Adds Special Interest to Local Observance,” *Mt Pleasant News*, May 28, 1957, 1). With expansion plans for the Henry County Health Center in Saunders Park, the Henry County Veterans Memorial Marker was planned in December 1993 to be moved, as the location was needed for the new addition (“Health center expansion project totals \$6 million, now underway,” *Mt Pleasant News*, December 30, 1993, 30). On May 19, 1994, the Henry County Veterans Memorial Marker from next to the Henry County Health Center in Saunders Park to the northwest corner of the courthouse block. This move of this marker was the first step in the overall plan to construct larger a memorial to honor veterans.

On Memorial Day in May 1972, the Avenue of Flags organization was officially launched. On July 4th of that year, 51 deceased Henry County Veterans flags were raised and flown on the Courthouse Lawn for the first time. For twenty-two years, the display gained popularity. Eventually, the display of flags became too large for the Courthouse Lawn and spread to Saunders Park. The number of flags grew to 686 and plans for a permanent memorial began (“History of Avenue of Flags,” from Henry County IAGenWeb, [https://iagenweb.org/henry/Military/avenue\\_of\\_flag.html](https://iagenweb.org/henry/Military/avenue_of_flag.html)). The Henry County Avenue of Flags Committee had raised \$43,000 of the \$55,000 by the time of the move of the marker. The memorial planned to be constructed consisted of seven granite tablets set on concrete pentagonal base measuring 23 feet in radius. One tablet would include the five military service emblems, the Avenue of Flags logo, and an inscription dedicating the memorial to veterans. The other six tablets would be engraved with names. The 21-foot flagpoles previously used in the Avenue of Flags program were being sold, among other fundraisers (“Changing memorials,” *Mt Pleasant News*, May 19, 1994, 1). On Veterans Day, November 11, 1994, the Avenue of Flags Veterans Memorial of Henry County was dedicated, in honor of deceased Henry County Veterans who served in the US Armed Forces. The markers were originally engraved with names of 686 area Veterans, representing the 686 flags last flown. Each Memorial Day weekend, 51 flags are raised and flown on the Henry County Courthouse Lawn, representing the original number of flags first flown in 1972. As of Memorial Day in May 2023, there are 1,504 Veterans names engraved on the Memorial. Names are added twice a year, prior to Memorial Day and prior to Veterans Day (“History of Avenue of Flags,” [https://iagenweb.org/henry/Military/avenue\\_of\\_flag.html](https://iagenweb.org/henry/Military/avenue_of_flag.html)).

A Centennial Celebration for the Henry County Courthouse was held on July 27, 2012.

The building continues to serve as the Henry County Courthouse in 2024.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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## Location map



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**Site plan**



Henry County Assessor (<https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>)

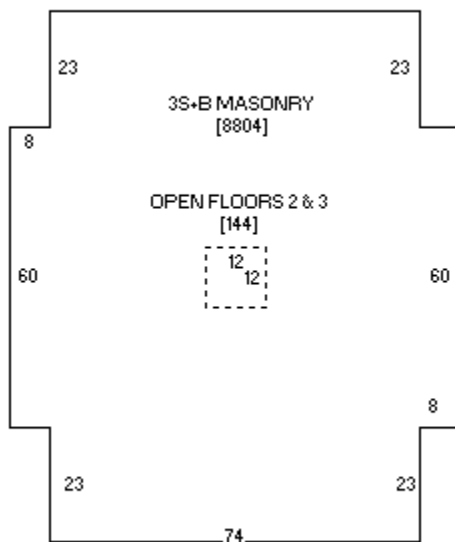
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**Building footprint**



Sketch by [www.camavision.com](http://www.camavision.com)

Henry County Assessor (<https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>)

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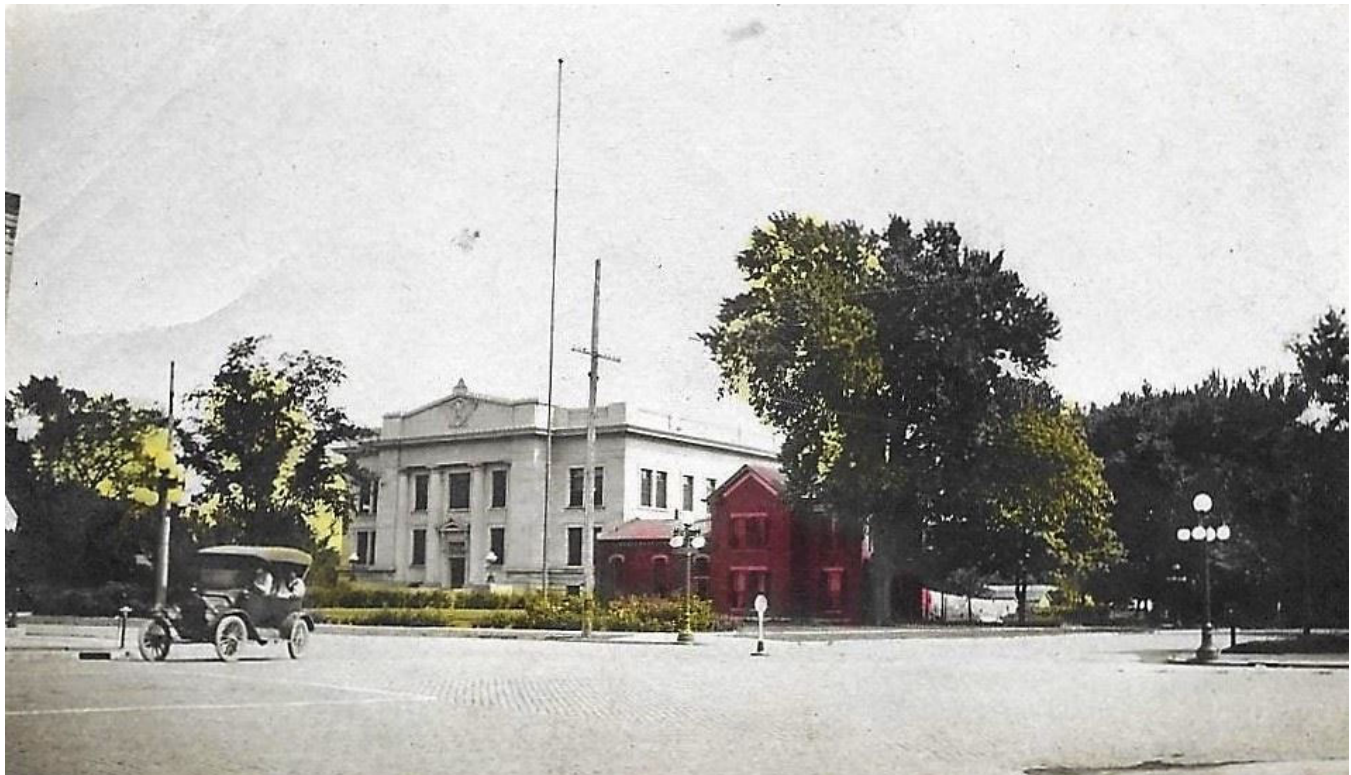
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**Historic images**



**Courthouse after completion in 1914 and prior to move of sheriff's residence in 1921  
(HCHT Facebook album)**

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**Courthouse in 1920s (HCHT Facebook album)**



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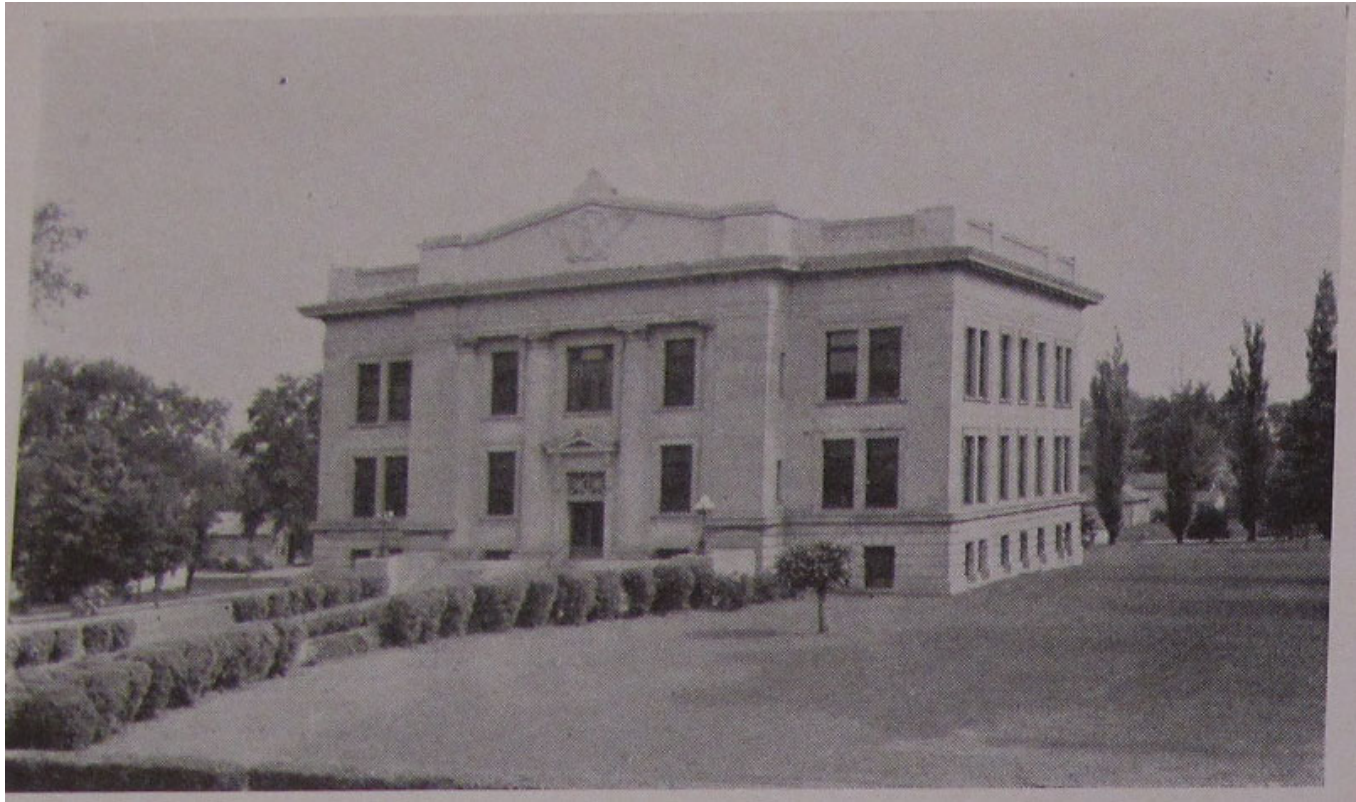
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**Courthouse in 1938 (*Mount Pleasant City Directory, Groce 1938*)**

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Henry County Honor Roll on the northwest corner of the block from 1943 to 1949 (HCHT Facebook album)

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**Property on east portion of 1947 aerial photograph of Mt Pleasant, looking north  
(HCHT files, printed in *Des Moines Register*, April 27, 1947, sec 9, p3, p83)**

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**Courthouse in 1950s, with Statue of Liberty replica (HCHT Facebook album)**

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**Courthouse block on 1969 aerial (Iowa Geographic Map Server)**

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**Courthouse lawn on Veteran's Day in 1970s, with parking along east side of block  
(Debbie Turley Schmidt, HCHT Facebook album)**

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**View of courthouse in 1974, with Statue of Liberty at left  
(Dyall photos, HCHS binder, Mt Pleasant library)**

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1980 photograph from courthouse survey and subsequent listing on NRHP (SHPO 1980)



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1990 survey photograph (Naumann 1991)

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Courthouse block on 1994 aerial (Iowa Geographic Map Server)

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**Courthouse block on 2002 aerial (Iowa Geographic Map Server)**

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**Digital photographs**



**Photograph 44-00442-001. Henry County Courthouse block, looking southeast (June 2024)**

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Photograph 44-00442-002. North elevation, looking south (October 2023)

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**Photograph 44-00442-003. East elevation, looking west (October 2023)**

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**Photograph 44-00442-004. West elevation, looking east (October 2023)**

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**Photograph 44-00442-005. South elevation, looking north (October 2023)**



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**Photograph 44-00442-006. First story of courthouse, looking northwest (October 2023)**

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Photograph 44-00442-007. Center of interior of courthouse, looking northwest (October 2023)

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**Photograph 44-00442-008. Henry County Courthouse block, looking southeast (June 2024)**

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**Photograph 44-00442-009. Henry County Veterans Memorial Marker, looking southeast (June 2024)**

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**Photograph 44-00442-010. Statue of Liberty, looking southeast (June 2024)**

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Photograph 44-00442-011. Plaque on Statue of Liberty, looking southeast (June 2024)

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**Photograph 44-00442-012. Avenue of Flags Veterans Memorial of Henry County, looking south (June 2024)**

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Photograph 44-00442-013. Avenue of Flags Veterans Memorial of Henry County, looking northeast (June 2024)



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**Photograph 44-00442-014. Parking lot to south of courthouse, looking east (June 2024)**